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# Review of *All Indians Do Not Live in Teepees (or Casinos)* by Catherine C. Robbins

Bruce E. Johansen

*University of Nebraska at Omaha*

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*All Indians Do Not Live in Teepees (or Casinos).* By Catherine C. Robbins. Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2011. xvi + 385 pp. Photographs, illustrations, notes, bibliographic essay, index. \$26.95 paper.

Catherine C. Robbins's highly personal tour of contemporary Indian Country begins with a moving description of 2,000 sets of human remains being returned from Harvard University "to the people of the Pecos Pueblo and their kin at Jemez" in 1999. The book then degenerates into a long rant of pet peeves that annoy its author.

Robbins's portrait of Indian casinos is not flattering (their glitziness spoils reservation vistas, she says). She doesn't think Indians dignify themselves by lecturing whites about sovereignty. In Robbins's view, Indians practicing their hunting and fishing rights under treaties bring an unwelcome din to the streams and woods. Put all of this together, and, according to Robbins, we have a new stereotype: the Casino Indian, "wily, rich, fat, corrupt, ready to ruin neighborhoods." They, writes the author, "have morphed from downtrodden, peaceful Indians to sovereignty-spouting bad neighbors." No Indian tribe or nation's members should brag about sovereignty, writes Robbins, unless they are prepared to offer a full range of governmental services, including senior care.

Like all stereotypes, Robbins's inventions are simplistic. The real world is more nuanced than Robbins lets on. She perhaps should look

at the Muckleshoots, a 2,200-member tribe near Seattle, which has leveraged recovery of fishing rights, a casino and bingo hall, along with diversification into other businesses, into nation-building on a basic and enduring scale. Deeply impoverished, down to a half acre of common land in 1970, the Muckleshoots have built a full range of services—health care, schools, scholarships, and more, including senior care (free homes for elders over sixty years of age who need them). This contrasts with Robbins's characterization of casino infrastructure benefits as "modest."

While she writes in a comfortable style, Robbins's portrayal of today's Indian Country often is narrow. Her sourcing is also frequently light. The book has seventy-five pages of endnotes, but these are heavy on newspaper articles and websites. Her brief discussion of uranium's effects on the Navajos, for example, says the literature is extensive, and then she fails to mention the most important works, such as *The Navajo People and Uranium Mining* (2006) edited by Doug Brugge, Timothy Benally, and Ester Yazzie-Lewis; Peter Eichstaedt's *If You Poison Us: Uranium and American Indians* (1994); and Judy Pasternak's *Yellow Dirt: An American Story of a Poisoned Lands and a People Betrayed* (2010).

This is a confusing book. Amidst her annoyance at assertive, living Indians, Robbins occasionally lets rip a grief-stricken historical blast, such as: "The Americas became a killing ground for Native peoples. . . . extermination . . . was the agenda." She also delivers some enlightening profiles; the ones describing Veronica Tiller and James Luna are treasures. Overall, however, this book can be frustrating, occasionally infuriating.

BRUCE E. JOHANSEN  
School of Communication  
University of Nebraska at Omaha